

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-11 and 13-22 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-11, 13 and 14 are allowed. Claims 15-22 stand rejected. In the present Amendment, claims 15-18 have been amended and claims 20-22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been introduced into the present application by the amendments to claims 15-18. As discussed below, the amendments to claims 15-18 were suggested by the Examiner in the final Office Action and should put claims 15-19 into allowable condition. Therefore, the present Amendment should not require any further search or consideration on the part of the Examiner.

Applicants appreciate the withdrawal of most of the rejections from the previous Office Action in view of applicants' last response and the allowance of claims 1-11 and 13-14.

Applicants also appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 15-19. Applicants have amended claims 15-18 as suggested by the Examiner, so claims 15-19 should now be in allowable condition. In view of the amendments to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 15-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, has been rendered moot.


The rejection of claims 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maier et al. (EP 1 101 764) is respectfully traversed. However, since these claims have been canceled from the present application, it is respectfully submitted that this rejection has been rendered moot. It is respectfully submitted that the cancellation of claims 20-22 from the present patent application should not be considered to be an acquiescence to the rejection or the arguments made by the Examiner in support thereof. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 20-22 in one or more continuation applications.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that each of the presently pending claims in this application is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to issue a Notice of Allowance for pending claims 1-11 and 13-19.

Applicants believe that no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 03-2775, under Order No. 09879-00034-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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